

September 24, 2001

An Open Letter to Terrorists

You caught American napping; there is nothing new about that. For over 226 years Americans have almost never been prepared — we weren't prepared in 1775, in 1812 or in subsequent conflicts and we never seem to anticipate where trouble will emerge next. When there isn't trouble we neglect our national security, and dismantle our intelligence and trust in treaties with treaty breakers. Yes, we may seem like freedom loving, good-natured fools, but pause a moment in your gloating—you who would achieve wicked ends by murdering the innocent. There is another pattern in our history you have failed to consider.

For in each of these conflicts Americans drew on the wellspring of faith, turned their eyes toward heaven for hope, and with a humble dependence on Divine Providence applied themselves to the task of defending liberty and serving justice. Our efforts were at times slow and sometimes mocked by our enemies, but the voices of our foes cry out to you their warning—from their graves.

You, who would gloat, consider that you have awakened a terrible opponent. It is not the hot-tempered anger of the braggartly, boisterous fool who lacks wisdom and self-discipline — it is rather a patient unswerving icy resolve as relentless as the hound on the chase. You have unsheathed a sword in the hand of a nation that is unified in grief, joined in resolve, and determined to render justice.

Americans are not presumptuous enough to believe we can eliminate evil — only the love of God can purge evil from the heart of man, but we can and will punish terrorists, and you will join our former enemies leaving the world a better place.

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